

REDUCING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY VIOLENCE: NOW IS THE TIME

"This job of keeping our children safe, and teaching them well, is something we can only do together, with the help of friends and neighbors, the help of a community, and the help of a nation."

– President Barack Obama, December 16, 2012

When schools are the centers of their communities, students, parents, and entire neighborhoods benefit. Ensuring that schools are sanctuaries for teaching and learning—and free of crime and violence—is a priority for the President and the administration.

THE NEED

Violence and trauma in schools and communities can affect students' overall health and well-being and their educational outcomes. Far too many students experience or are exposed to violence, and schools and communities often struggle to respond and provide appropriate and sustainable resources and supports.

According to a 2011 report from the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 74 percent of public schools recorded one or more violent incidents of crime in the 2009-2010 academic year, and 23 percent of schools reported bullying among students on a daily or weekly basis. The challenges that schools face in developing and maintaining safe, positive climates for learning are complex, but schools must remain safe havens in communities for students and their families.

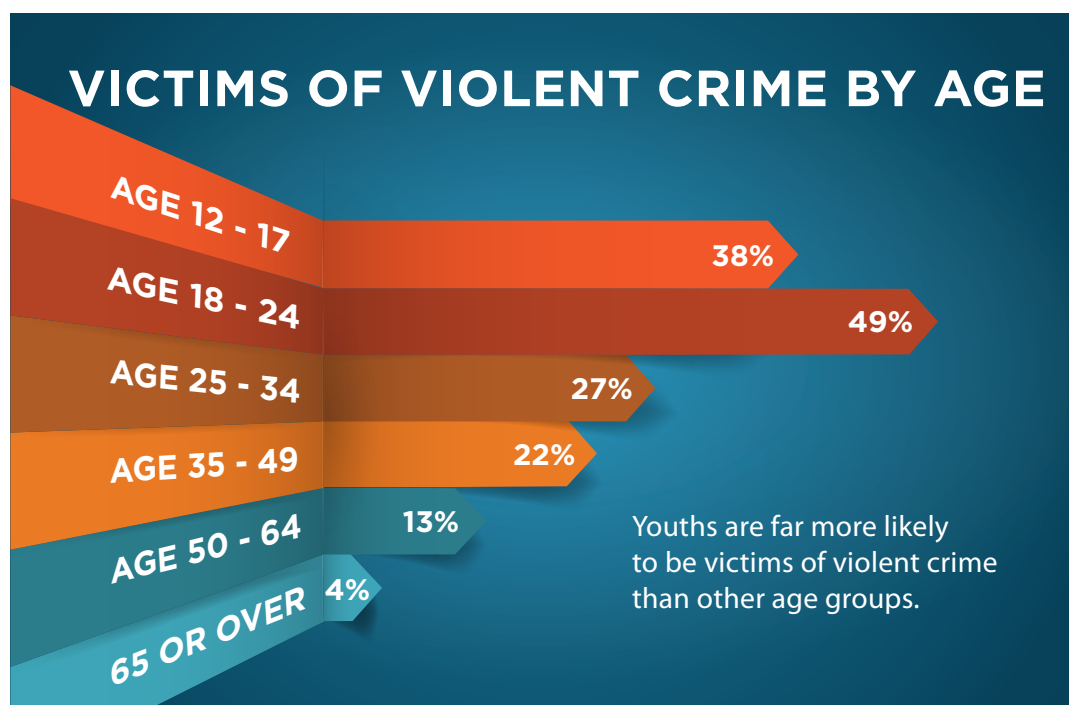
THE GOAL

All children should grow up free from fear and violence. The President's school safety-related proposals reflect a national goal of ensuring that all children live in safe neighborhoods and attend nurturing schools that provide them with the services and supports that they need to thrive.

THE PLAN

The President has proposed a comprehensive plan, *Now is the Time*, to protect schools and communities by reducing gun violence and providing resources to schools. Approximately \$112 million in new funds will not only help to prepare schools for emergencies, but also create nurturing school climates, and provide intensive supports to students who are exposed to violence. Other activities include collecting data on indicators of school safety and providing guidance on school discipline policies. Key education-related elements of the President's plan and the budgetary commitments include:

- **Emergency Management Grants (\$30 million):** These one-time grants to states will help schools to develop, implement, and improve emergency management plans, in order to strengthen their capacity to prevent or mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and crisis events.



- **School Climate Transformation Grants (\$50 million):** These grants would enable school districts and states to implement evidence-based interventions that improve school climate and prevent and reduce bullying and other problem behaviors.
- **Project Prevent Grants (\$25 million):** These grants would enable school districts with high levels of violence to provide social and emotional supports and mental health services for trauma or anxiety, and promote conflict resolution and other school-based strategies to prevent future violence.

The budget includes a total of \$280 million for the reauthorized Successful, Safe, and Healthy Students program, which includes the *Now is the Time* initiatives as well a variety of activities that improve conditions for learning so that students are safe, healthy, and successful.

PARTNERSHIPS

The U.S. Department of Education is continuing its work with the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Homeland Security to keep schools and communities safe and ensure that students have the supports they need to succeed.

For example, agencies are working together to develop guidance on emergency management plans for schools, houses of worship, and institutions of higher education, which will be released by May 2013. Additionally, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius are leading a national conversation to increase understanding about mental health issues. HHS also is slated to lead a proposed \$55 million initiative called Project AWARE to reach 750,000 young people through programs that will identify mental illness early and refer young people to the treatment services that they need.



The Department of Justice also will work in close coordination with the Department of Education on a \$150 million proposed Comprehensive School Safety program, which would provide funds for hiring school personnel including mental health professionals and school resource officers, purchasing school safety equipment, and other school safety activities.



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